

Salem City Schools, but she dedicates so much more of her time and her effort to the City. Through Junior Achievement of South-west Virginia, she mentors elementary school students through programs on financial literacy, good citizenship, entrepreneurship, and career paths. JA named her its volunteer of the year in 2018.

For Salem's 215th birthday, Ms. Tucker co-founded a grassroots social media group, Salem215, to celebrate the City and share news about its cultural, economic, and governmental activities. She is also a staunch patron of Roanoke College's Toy Like Me program to modify toys for children with disabilities, donating to it, referring children to it, and assisting with its activities.

I would like to offer Laura my sincerest congratulations on receiving the Charles Brown Award, a recognition of all the good that she has done and continues to do for our hometown.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, as the Chairman of the Ways and Means Worker and Family Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Supplemental Security Income Program—or SSI, it is an honor and privilege to recognize the 50th Anniversary of this essential program that serves as our nation's fundamental safety net for low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

The charge that a humane society should care for its vulnerable is long-standing. The Chinese philosopher Confucius said: "In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of." The Jewish teaching of tzedakah advocates treating every person with righteousness and justice. In the book of Matthew, Jesus said, "As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me." And, Mahatma Gandhi indicated that "the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members."

In the 20th century, our country established and improved programs that created the foundation of a system to care for vulnerable Americans—such as FDR's New Deal, LBJ's Great Society, and the hundreds of laws to strengthen these programs. Fifty years ago, many low-income Americans with significant disabilities experienced painful hardship because they lacked the monthly income to support themselves. No federal program met their needs; rather, each state had separate rules for who could receive benefits, for how long, and for how much.

In 1972, a Democratic Congress and a Republican President recognized the challenges faced by low-income people with severe disabilities and amended the Social Security Act to replace the inadequate, inconsistent, state support system with a permanent, national

benefits program that offers a minimum, monthly income. As a federal program, SSI consolidated several state and federal elderly anti-poverty and disability programs into one program to support the most vulnerable.

Today, SSI provides food, shelter, heat in the winter, and dignity to more than 7.6 million American seniors and those with severe disabilities. In Cook County, Illinois, which includes my Congressional District, over 140,000 people rely on SSI to help buy food, pay rent, keep the lights on, and pay out-of-pocket health care costs. Importantly, SSI eligibility often increases eligibility for other important benefits—such as state public assistance, Medicaid, and SNAP—to also assist with critical expenses, like hospital stays, doctors' bills, and prescriptions.

In addition to supporting seniors and adults with disabilities, SSI benefits also help many children with disabilities and health conditions access the specialized care and treatment they need. Further, SSI helps compensate for the loss of income that is common for parents managing their children's complex care. Over 33,000 Illinois children receive these vital supports each month.

As we reflect on the strengths of SSI, we also must recognize the need for improvement. Given that SSI represents the only income for more than half of SSI recipients, we have a responsibility to ensure that the program truly protects disabled and elderly Americans from poverty and hardship. Further due to our country's history of systemic racism, including in employment and health care, people of color disproportionately experience poverty and disability compared to their peers. Consequently, policymakers need to modernize the SSI program to promote stability for the most vulnerable Americans.

We must improve monthly benefits to protect the elderly and disabled from suffering in poverty. We must adjust the asset limits for inflation. Currently, the program caps monthly savings at \$2,000 and \$3,000 for participating individuals and couples. If we adjusted asset limits for inflation since 1972, the asset cap for individuals would be \$9,000. Raising assets limits would allow millions of beneficiaries to appropriately save for emergencies, rather than having to make immoral choices between food or shelter or health. Additionally, we need to increase the outdated income limits that remain the same as they were 50 years ago. In short, we must modernize the SSI program so that it effectively supports the poorest Americans, bolstering dignity and well-being.

I am especially proud that, as we mark the 50th anniversary of SSI, my colleagues and I at the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support continue working closely with the Social Security Administration to improve outreach to those missing seniors and people with disabilities as they reopen their field offices, but there is much more we need to do to help reconnect those whom the pandemic disconnected from SSI, either from applying for initial benefits or being separated from current benefits.

As we celebrate five decades of the SSI program, I would like to recognize the amazing local disability advocates who tirelessly provide the on-going, vital help for vulnerable individuals in Chicago. These organizations serve as points of access for long-term sup-

ports and services, including home health care and assistive technology. They help expand and defend people's rights, including supporting self-advocacy groups and legal assistance. A few of these wonderful organizations are:

- Access Living
- The Arc of Illinois
- Chicago ADAPT
- Chicago Health Advocates
- Equip for Equality
- Health and Disability Advocates
- Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Illinois Department of Aging
- Legal Counsel for Health Justice
- Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
- Voices for Illinois Children

In closing, I celebrate the first 50 years of the Supplemental Security Income program, and I promise to continue to fight for dignity for our most vulnerable citizens to make SSI's impact even bigger over the next 50 years.

RECOGNIZING MS. ANAMARIA LABAO CABATO, OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER IN THE 51ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Mr. VARGAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Anamaria Labao Cabato, an outstanding arts and culture advocate and community member in the 51st Congressional District.

Ms. Cabato is being honored for her long-time commitment to advancing multicultural arts through various programs and initiatives. She is the Executive Director of PASACAT Philippine Performing Arts Company and has been involved with the organization since its inception 52 years ago in 1970. PASACAT is comprised of dancers, instrumentalists, and "harana" singers. As many as thirty performances are given yearly to various educational, cultural, religious, and social organizations in the region.

Ms. Cabato serves as a board member of the San Diego Area Dance Alliance, was a founding partner of VOCAL, (Voices of Community at All Levels) and is a member of the City of San Diego Cultural Diversity Committee.

Most recently, Ms. Cabato was the co-chair of the new Filipinos of South Bay Exhibit (FOSBE) at the Chula Vista Library, which shares stories of Filipinos of the South Bay in San Diego County.

Ms. Cabato is being honored as the 51st District Constituent of the Month in October 2022, during Filipino American History Month. She is recognized for her work preserving and promoting Asian Pacific culture through the arts and contributing to the overall cultural vitality of the 51st Congressional District. She has vast experience as an arts administrator and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting from San Diego State University.